SUMMARY

The present issue of the „Ethos" is entitled Art at the Crossroads, and it is devoted to the condition of fine arts at the end of the 20th century.

The text From the Editors directs the reader's attention to the fact that lately we have witnessed quite radical disappearance of the meaning of art as a means of human communication. Art rejects such values as beauty, truth or good, and it either becomes expression of the artist's subjective experience, which is not measureable with any objective values, or is subordinated to some ideological, political or commercial functions. However, the proper and still unceasing function of art is that of responding to the need for beauty and sense, which is inherent in man, as well as that of stimulating its addressee to the affirmaton of these values. It is precisely in this sense that art is a form of expression which contributes to saving the human nature.

The extract from John Paul II's address on the opening the Sistine Chapel after its renovation offers reflection on the possibility and way of showing invisible God through visible beauty.

The first part of articles, entitled For the Sake of the Ethos of Art, opens with the homily delivered by Joseph Card. Ratzinger, on St. Cecilia's Day. The author speaks about the religious dimension of music, which is particularly stressed in the Old Testament Book of Psalms, as well as about the novelty of the song sung to the Lord by the Christians. Continuing the idea of reflection on music, Bohdan Pociej describes the main currents of the twentieth century music. In the succeeding text, Maria Braun-Gałkowska presents the results of the survey on the influence of violence shown by the mass-media on the psyche of a child, and she wonders about the ways to prevent the resulting indifference to human suffering. In turn Fr Krzysztof Niedałtowski writes about contemporary sacral architecture, presenting a number of postulates for builders of new churches. Giovanni Reale considers the condition of the contemporary fine arts, seeing the essence of their crisis in the loss of the sense of form conceived of in the Platonic meaning of the word, that is, as the ideal measure of things. A broad panorama of the contemporary controversy over the theory of art is presented by Henryk Kiereś, who sees the remedy for the crisis of art in a return to its Aristotelian conception.

The succeeding part of articles is entitled Word and Value. It opens with Paweł Przywara's recollection of his grandfather, a painter. The next two texts present spiritual profiles of two eminent contemporary poets: Edward Stachura (by Stefan Sawicki) and Zbigniew Herbert (by Józef Fert). The subsequent article, written by Rafał A. Ziemkiewicz, is an outline of the history of science-fiction literature in after-war Poland. Jan F. Jacko in turn describes the conception of the rhapsodic theatre as seen in Karol Wojtyła's theatrical reviews, and points to the inspiration for this conception. In the text closing this part of the issue, Fr Jerzy Szymik presents the profile of the poet Joseph von Eichendorff, together with his own translation of his poetry.

The subsequent section, entitled The Visible as an Expression of the Invisible, is devoted to the religious dimension of art. It opens with a reflection by an eminent painter, Stanisław Rodziński, upon the need for and possibility of a return to metaphysical subjects in contemporary painting. Jan S. Wojciechowski considers the situation of Polish art in the 90's,

presenting profiles of some artists whose output offers a departure from the lately fashionable postmodernist aesthetics. Also the article by Małgorzata Kitowska-Łysiak is devoted to reflection upon the condition of modern Polish art and of artistic criticism. Janusz Marciniak in turn takes up the metaphore of art as the home of life in order to pose the question whether modern art can still remain such a home.

The concluding part of articles, entitled Man–Work–God, is devoted to Christian art. In the article opening this section Antoni Szwed recollects S. Kierkegaard's criticism of aesthetic Christianity. Also the reflection offerred by Fr Jan Sochoń refers to the metaphore of art as a home. Ewa Klekot writes about the presence of sacrum in modern art. The two papers concluding this section offer reflection on the Middle Ages, the epoch in which the religious dimension of art was present in a particular way. Małgorzata U. Mazurczak writes about the way in which the relationship between man and God was presented in the art of this period, whereas Mirosława Hanusiewicz presents the subject of the body as a symbol in the sermons on Mary, the Chaste Lady, of Jan Paterek of Szamotuły.

The section Interviews of the „Ethos" includes Fr Tadeusz Styczeń's talk with Agnieszka Duczmal, an eminent Polish conductor and the director of the chamber orchestra „Amadeus".

The section entitled Thinking about Fatherland... comprises some poems written by Tadeusz Różewicz, Fr Jan Sochoń, Ludmiła Marjańska, Fr Jerzy Szymik and Paweł Przywara, devoted to the topic of the homeland.

The next part of the issue bears the title Discussion of the Authority of the Teacher, and it includes the script of the discussion organized by the quarterly „Ethos" and the quarterly „Scriptores Scholarum", which was inspired by Irena Sławińska's article „The Authority of the Teacher?", published in „Ethos" (37).

The section Notes and Reviews opens with a review by Leszek S. Kolek of S. Heaney's book *Zawierzyć poezji – To Trust Poetry*. Ireneusz Ziemiński reviews R. Kubicki's book *Zmierzch sztuki – Decline of Art*, devoted to postmodernist art. Antoni Szwed discusses a biography of John Paul II by T. Szulc, an American journalist. Janusz Trela writes about the book by Bp. A. Scola presenting the main ideas of Hans Urs von Balthasar's theology. Anna Papierkowska reviews J. Jaworska's album of works by Polish artists devoted to the Pope, which are collected in The Polish Home in Rome. Elżbieta Ryszka writes about L. Dyczewski's book *Rodzina, społeczeństwo, państwo – Family, Society, State*. This part of the volume is concluded with the sub-section „Proposals of the Ethos".

The first paper in the section Reports includes a talk of Jacek Cydzik, CSSR, with Tadeusz Styczeń, SDS, devoted to the question of the foundations of ethics, which was the subject of the seminar of the Institute of John Paul II held in Castel Gandolfo from August 12th till August 14th 1997, by invitation from and in the presence of the Holy Father. Wisława Jordan in turn describes the exhibition *Koniec wieku. Sztuka polskiego modernizmu 1890-1914 – The End of the Century. The Art of Polish Modernism 1890-1914*, organized by E. Charazińska and Ł. Kossowski in Warsaw, whereas Iwona Ulfik discusses a seminar on violence in the media organized by the State Board for Radio and Television.

The standing column The Pontificate in the Eyes of the World includes Marian Wawrzynkowski's paper devoted to the topic of the pontificate of John Paul II in philately.

In the section entitled Through the Prism of the „Ethos" Witold Starnawski wonders about the attitude of both the political elites and the whole society to the heritage of communism.

The present issue concludes with the standing columns: Bibliography (by Maria Filipiak) and Notes about the Authors (by Mirosława Chuda), and also with the section: Letters, which includes a rectification by Piotr Skórzyński concerning his review of K. Kąkolewski's book *Umarły cmentarz – Dead Cemetary*.